



Every dog has his fun(d) raising day



EVERY dog has his day so the saying goes, and Sunday, September 9, was the canine chance of a lifetime for four-legged friends of The Spastics Society to put their best paws forward.

The sponsored 'walkies' in aid of the Society on Hampstead Heath, organised by members of the Soroptimists Club of St Albans, raised approximately £600. Thirty to 40 people, plus dogs, took part although the dog/owner ratio wasn't necessarily one person, one dog!



The happiest days of his life

THIS is the picture that says it all for Christy Nolan, a 13-year-old spastic boy — school days really ARE the happiest days of his life.

On pages 6 and 7 Spastics News tells the story of Christy Nolan's schooldays at an ordinary Dublin Comprehensive, where Christy, the boy described as a writer of genius, is just one of 740 on the school register.



Putting their best paws forward...

• PICTURE above left: Madelon Dimont, one of the organisers of the sponsored dog walk, takes a breather on Hampstead Heath along with Heartrug, the Italian Sheepdog, Fanny the Boxer, and Tizzy, a King Charles spaniel.

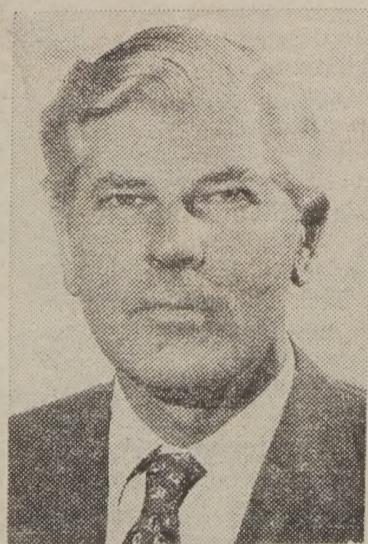
• PICTURE above shows Spastics Society supporters Margaret Owen and Jill Scott accompanied by their four-legged friend Wrenthorpe on the sponsored walkies." Verdict of the human walkers was that it fun way to raise cash. Judging by the way the dogs bounded happily about the Heath, they agreed.

Into the 80's with the 'Save a Baby' campaign

THE Spastics Society's 'Save a Baby' campaign will continue into 1980 because the situation for mothers and babies in Britain is 'even more bleak' than the Society thought when the nationwide campaign was launched in 1978, says Chairman Mr Dorrien Belson in the Society's Annual Report.

In addition, 'the threat of more cutbacks in the health service suggests that there will be even less money to maintain present services, let alone develop new provision for maternity and child care which is so urgently needed,' he declares.

The newly-published



• DORRIEN BELSON

Annual Report will be presented at the Society's AGM in London on October 13.

Mr Belson writes that the 'Save a Baby' campaign is the most dramatic and ambitious in the Society's

history, and it is one that had to succeed.

It was with 'great satisfaction' that Mr Belson reports that the campaign so far has 'not only alerted the nation to the need for positive action to halt the toll of needless death and handicap but has united the Society in a momentous crusade.' The campaign had captured the imagination and attention of all sections of society, and its aims received widespread support.

He comments:

'This is a campaign of hard facts and vital issues, and the Society broke new ground with its strongly worded national advertising campaign. We detailed the cost, not only in terms of human happiness, but to our country's economy, of caring for people who could have led productive, fulfilled lives.'



'It was clear from the outset that the Society was prepared to take a bold line in proving that all was not well with the nation's services for mothers and babies, and that Britain had too low a place in the international statistics on infant mortality and crippling handicaps.'

'Throughout the campaign the areas with the most shameful figures have been publicised, and although we were

Continued on Page 10

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SN Oct

Meeting the stars at Colwall Court



THREE young summer visitors to the Stars Organisation for Spastics holiday home, Colwall Court, Bexhill, will treasure this holiday snap for a long time. It's a memento of the happy day when actress Nerys Hughes dropped in along with husband Patrick Turley. 'Liver Bird'

Nerys was appearing in 'A Touch of Spring' at the Devonshire Park Theatre, Eastbourne.

The holidaymakers were Paulette Skeete from Brent, Elizabeth Lemon from Eton, Windsor, and Louise Bulmer from Camberley.

With the children's holidays over with everyone

back at school, Colwall Court starts on its off-season 'Bargain Breaks' for handicapped adults. 'Entertainment Weeks' feature trips to the local theatre as well as classes on play production and make-up. Speakers on previous 'Entertainment Weeks' have been Cyril Fletcher, and Tim Rice.

The first Colwall Court 'Entertainments Week' is November 4-10 (when Leslie Crowther will be visiting), and the second December 2-8. There are still a few vacancies left for both dates. Applications and details from Colwall Court, Pages Avenue, Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex. Telephone: 211491.

A new book about independent living—and a great deal more

THE Source Book for the Disabled* is a superb new book which can be recommended to any disabled person who wishes to extend his or her independence—at whatever level. It is packed full of marvellous ideas for overcoming all sorts of physical problems. Suggestions range from the simplest of book rests, and bags to hang on to walking aids, to a baby's cot which can be managed by a disabled parent.

A large number of the aids and adaptions are illustrated in clear, bold line-drawings. It is a book which could be browsed through for hours, or consulted when one was faced with a specific problem.

Two things make this source book unusual—and add greatly to its value. The first is that at least some of the authors are themselves disabled. The book is clearly based on personal experience, a

fact which adds force to many of its ideas and suggestions.

The second unusual, if not unique aspect, is that it tackles more than just physical problems. It discusses attitudes, needs, fears and prejudices. Attitudes taken by disabled people towards the rest of society are described in a section headed 'Asking for help,' while 'attitudes of the public' lists reactions commonly experienced by disabled people from society at large, in a way which is concerned to explain rather than condemn. Overall the chapter, called 'Disabled or handicapped' is thoughtfully written and could make valuable reading, especially for young people about to leave school. Indeed, parts of this chapter might well serve as the basis for class discussions in special schools. It points the way towards integration—with disabled people needing to have sympathy for the able-bodied members of the community. It is here that a book which can say 'We who are disabled' has much to contribute towards a common understanding.

The chapter on the home discusses adaptation in great detail, room by room. There are other chapters on personal needs, and sexuality, both containing a great deal of helpful advice. In addition, two further chapters are particularly worth mentioning.

One is called 'The disabled parent,' and gives a host of suggestions on how disabled parents might set about overcoming many of the problems involved in looking after the tiny baby and then the growing child. The authors are concerned to point out how many problems are common to all parents, be they able-bodied or

handicapped, but then go on to show that many of the additional problems caused by physical limitations may be surmounted with forethought.

The other chapter which must be highlighted is called 'The disabled child,' and is addressed particularly to those parents suffering the loneliness of the realisation that their child is handicapped. Again it seems to have been written from the standpoint of experience. It is practical, and above all, positive. It has valuable advice to give, as well as encouragement.

Since it has been written for the international market, this book cannot provide as detailed a list of British books and organisations as can be found in an exclusively British publication. Nevertheless it gives the main bodies and some books, and it is likely that any aid or appliance suggested in its pages could be tracked down by the Disabled Living Foundation, which it does include in its list of names and addresses.

This book is about independence, but is about realism, too. It is concerned to enable people to achieve such independence as might lie within their grasp, if only they knew that there were more ways of doing things—whether it be combing their own hair for the first time, or setting up house. It is full of good sense, much of which has probably been accumulated the hard way.

VALERIE LANG

* The Source Book for the Disabled: an illustrated guide to easier more independent living for physically disabled people, their families and friends, edited by Gloria Hale. Published by the Paddington Press on September 24, 1979. Price £4.95 soft cover, £7.95 hardback.

Let's be creative

HOW often have you given up in despair an attempt to master some embroidery or knitting, maybe with someone peering over your shoulder making you feel nervous and unable to attain to their expectations. The unfinished article abandoned, finds its way to the back of a cupboard.

A new book—'Crafts for the Disabled' by Elizabeth Gault and Susan Sykes,* craft teachers, may kindle or rekindle interest in a particular craft already attempted—or something completely new and set you on the road to creative activity.

The book is divided into five chapters each dealing with a different craft—canvas embroidery, soft toys, knitting and crocheting, chair caning and coiled work. There are step by step instructions for making each article, the materials required, how each

stitch is worked, eg. they describe no less than 16 stitches in the embroidery section, each graphically illustrated.

The writers have assumed that the disabled person may not have the use of two hands and have some suggestions for gadgetry, although this has been kept to a minimum and wherever possible household items are used.

No excuses are allowed for, unsteady hands, lack of mobility, limited sight—such are taken into consideration in each subject matter and design. It could be an ideal companion to any handicapped person at home or in a centre with which to retreat to a quiet corner to tackle—at a snail's or hare's pace—an attractive tapestry bag, a felt toy or perhaps a stool for your home, among a host of other items specially designed for you to 'have a go.'

MERLE DAVIES

* Published by Astragal Books, price £5.95.



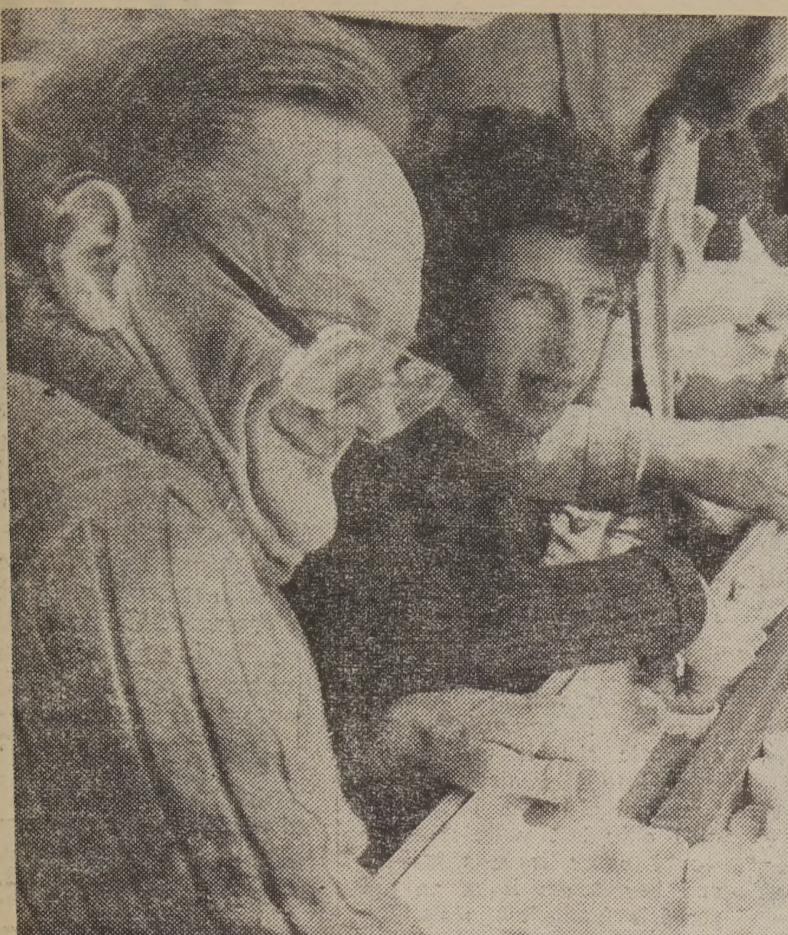
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• FREDDIE Starkins is as 'happy as a sandboy' working at the Norwich Work Centre and living at The Spastics Society's hostel in the town. A completely wrong decision many years ago meant that Freddie spent most of his life in an institution for the mentally handicapped, probably because there was so little understanding of his spastic condition.



• ALAN Marshall drilling holes in metal corner joints, a light engineering job he particularly enjoys.



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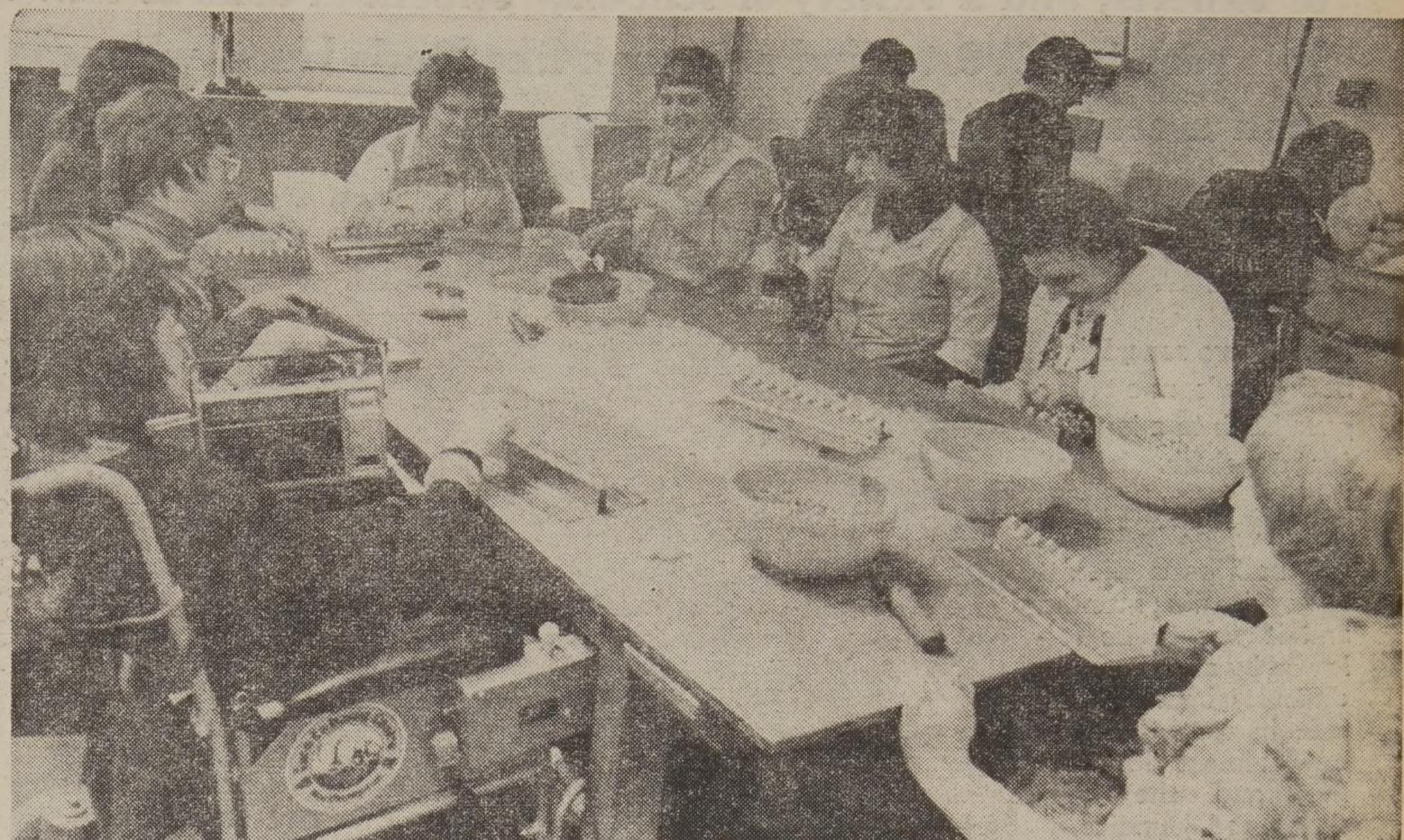
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SN Oct

Meet the workers at Norwich



• THE busy scene in one of the workshops at the Norwich Work Centre where 45 handicapped people take on a variety of jobs, and between them produce millions of components each year. They are an important part of the industrial scene in Norfolk where many firms appreciate the high quality of the work they sub-contract to the centre.

A fine city... a fine work centre

THE traveller approaching the capital of East Anglia on the road from London is confronted by a handsome boundary sign proclaiming: 'Welcome to Norwich. A fine city.' This pride of the Norwich people in their town is echoed by members of the Norfolk and Norwich Spastic Association when they speak about their work centre. They know they have a very fine work centre indeed.

If you wonder about the word 'Spastic' in the title of the association instead of the 'Spastics' used by the majority of local voluntary groups, then you must remember that Norfolk people have a centuries-old reputation of 'doing different'. Another of their firm beliefs is that what Norwich does today — London does tomorrow!

Certainly, the association — Nansa as it is known in the county — is an innovator. If Nansa sees an unmet need by the handicapped people it cares about so much, it goes right ahead to do something about it. The association is celebrating its silver jubilee this year, and members look back on 25 years of solid achievement which has enriched the lives of the spastic people in their city and in their large, rural county.

Nansa has a reputation of



• THE team which makes the Norwich Work Centre such a happy — and successful — place. In the centre of the line-up is Harry Knight, the Group Executive Officer of the Norfolk and Norwich Spastic Association. The work centre staff from left to right are: Arthur Scales, manager; Alan Taylor, supervisor; Ray Truswell, assistant manager; Pauline Meiklejohn, supervisor; Marlene Skipper, cook; and Jean Bunn, the centre's clerk.

never leaving a fund raising stone unturned, and many and varied are the schemes which are conceived to bring in the cash which is so urgently needed, particularly to run the work centre in Bowthorpe Road, Norwich. Nansa's silver jubilee appeal brochure points out that when the work centre opened with the first five workers in 1965 it cost £7,000 a year to run — in 1979 running costs are over £33,000.

Happy

Anybody visiting the centre realises that the money is well spent. The centre is such a happy, lively place, with radios playing, chats going on across the work tables and benches, and a camaraderie between the staff and the 45 handicapped people, so obviously enjoying their tasks. Productivity is high — literally millions of components are processed every year — and quality is first class, with immense trouble taken to turn out an excellent job, whether it is with electrical circuits or humble bottle caps — and over 50,000 of the

Continued on Page 4

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SN Oct

Today's patterns of care for handicapped children and adults involve a battery of experts, and a variety of schools, residential centres and welfare facilities. It is rare in 1979 to find a woman like Doris Huet, who was employed nearly half a century ago to care for a spastic child at home, and stayed to give...

Fifty years of devotion

AFTER two sons, Elizabeth Law's mother gave birth to a longed-for daughter. It had been a difficult pregnancy which had kept her bedridden almost the entire nine months, and it was to be followed by an even more difficult labour. So difficult in fact that Mrs Law almost lost her life, and the baby developed jaundice.

Like all proud and doting mothers, Elizabeth's kept a 'baby book' in which every detail is

Report by
Liz Cook

recorded. In an elegant, spidery hand, milestones like the christening, the first smile, the first tooth are lovingly recorded. But the page for the 'First step' was always to remain blank.

That was in 1927—and by the time Elizabeth was 18 months old it was obvious that something was terribly wrong. Then began the round of visits to London specialists for consultation and treatment that was only to end with the outbreak of war.

Jerking

When Elizabeth was about 3½ she was given calipers and put on a spinal frame designed to keep her limbs from flying about in the jerking movements typical of the athetoid victim of cerebral palsy—except that no one knew that then.

Meanwhile over in Ireland a young Irish girl, Doris Huet, was looking for work. She had had two years of orthopaedic training and worked in a hospital for a year, but the agency which had her name on its books kept



'BOUET' and Elizabeth Law have been together almost half a century and after all that time they are 'like sisters,' says Miss Law.

coming up with offers of 'Mother's help' and Miss Huet wanted something which involved nursing. She went to the agency and announced that she wanted her name removed from the books and that she would go to England. The agency protested, saying she would be lonely, but unknown to Miss Huet put an advertisement in the Irish Times which was seen by the Ear, Nose and Throat specialist Dr Horace Law, Elizabeth's uncle, father of Admiral Sir Horace Law, who thought Miss Huet sounded ideal.

Afterwards the Law family said it was evidently meant to be.

The day

And so over 48 years ago on August 15, 1931, Miss Huet joined the family and has been with Elizabeth ever since, becoming known as 'Bouet' in the process.

The Laws were living in the Dower House at Stamford Park and Mr Law was Chief Engineer at English Electric. Michael, the first born, was

away at prep school, Tim, aged seven, had a full-time governess and a French governess, both living in; there was a cook and a kitchen maid, a parlour maid and a 'twenny,' and Elizabeth was Bouet's only care. Within a year she had her off the spinal frame and riding a tricycle. It has always been a great grief to hear that she did not look after Elizabeth from a tiny baby—she is convinced that if she had she would have got Elizabeth to walk. Elizabeth can still remember being very cold at night and Bouet taking her into bed to keep her warm.

Exciting

Eventually the family moved south to a large and imposing house and Bouet, Elizabeth and all the house staff were sent on holiday to the seaside nearby for five weeks while alterations were carried out. She remembers it as a very exciting and frustrating time—so near and yet so far. It was a very old house with paneling downstairs which was ceremoniously polished once a year.

Meanwhile Elizabeth was still going, as she puts it, 'To various folk for treatment—one or two who were almost quacks—but as there was not even a NAME for what I had, my poor parents were so

anxious to help that they were on to almost anything—no expense spared.' One specialist, a psychologist Elizabeth remembers with gratitude, announced: 'Her brain is perfect—get a trained teacher for her,' and so a governess was employed, Mrs Morton, who was 'Brilliant.' Elizabeth's brothers by this time were on the traditional route of prep school, Wellington and Oxford. They adored their golden-haired, blue-eyed 'baby' sister and in the rough and tumble of their play treated her just as a 'normal' kid sister.

Elizabeth joined the Guide movement and has been Assistant Guide of the County Postal Ranger Unit for Handicapped Guides for 20 years. Last year she was awarded the coveted Laurel Award for her work.

Nearly half a century has passed since the young Irish girl came to England. Now Bouet is 70, her hair is grey but she still has the Irish chuckle in her voice when she talks. Elizabeth is a nature woman who among other things has coped with cancer. The big family house is long gone and the two of them live in a comfortable modern house equipped with an electric stair lift and furnished with the mementoes of a distinguished family. Lord Nelson was an ancestor and his

likeness gazes from several walls, along with family crests and oil paintings. Life follows an orderly pattern but the future is fraught with problems.

Bouet is no longer as strong as she was and although Elizabeth is enterprising and energetic she is too handicapped to live alone. Bouet promised old Mrs Law, who died only last year, that she would never leave Elizabeth and her dream is of an old people's bungalow nearby with someone else taking her place.

Search

But where will they find another Bouet? They are realistic that it will not be easy for someone else to step into Bouet's shoes. The two are devoted to each other after so many years together. Bouet, in conversation constantly refers to Elizabeth as a 'marvellous lady, that one' and calls her 'My love,' 'my sweetie' and 'darlin'.' There is no hint of servant and employer, or nurse and patient in their relationship. Instead, Elizabeth says simply with deep and abiding affection: 'We're more like sisters, really.'

World view on disabled riders

MORE than 350 delegates from 20 countries, including the USA and East Germany, attended the 3rd International Conference on Riding for the Disabled at Warwick University and the British Equestrian Centre at Kenilworth from September 24-27.

The conference, hosted by the British Riding for the Disabled Association, was being held in this country for the first time, but is the third to be held by the worldwide movement.

Delegates enjoyed a varied programme of lectures, films, discussions and riding and driving demonstrations.

Last year Riding for the Disabled groups in this country (there are now nearly 500) provided riding and driving therapy for more than 10,000 disabled children and adults, involving some 25,000 voluntary helpers.

Planning next year's hols

WEST Sussex Spastics Group, which celebrates its 15th anniversary next year, has launched a £4,900 holiday appeal fund to take 35 people to Ostend for a week's holiday in the spring.

Spinning toy is the tops



THE DIA Melchett Memorial Award of £2,500 for 1979 has been won by Miss Rosemary Martin of

London to develop this 'Rocking Spinning Toy' for handicapped children.

The DIA Trust makes the annual award for design of social responsibility and in the past it has been made for a minimum technology bicycle and for disaster housing, as well as designs to help the handicapped. This year's project—the Rocking Spinning Toy—provides a means of enriching the play possibilities of children of very varied ability. A prototype has already been tested at Queen Mary's Hospital, Carshalton.

Rosemary Martin says the principal benefit the award will bring will be the opportunity for further research and the possibility of finding a manufacturer for a playgroup toy which is good for all young children, with special benefits for the handicapped. Producing it might well be a very practical contribution to the International Year of the Child.

A fine work centre

Continued from Page 3

latter were processed on the day Spastics News called! The work centre needs industry to provide the work, but equally, industry needs the centre, and it has become a valued part of the industrial scene in the county. 'And we do not work as cheap labour, we ask firms to pay the going rate', Mr Arthur Scales, the work centre manager is quick to point out.

Nansa's Group Executive Officer is Mr Harry Knight, who is quietly confident about the success of the silver jubilee appeal this year. 'We have

built up a good name over the years, and people trust us to use money wisely and for a very good cause,' he says.

There is an air of confidence about Mr Knight, the work centre, and indeed throughout Nansa, which has made itself well known and highly valued through active publicity, and close contacts with supporters.

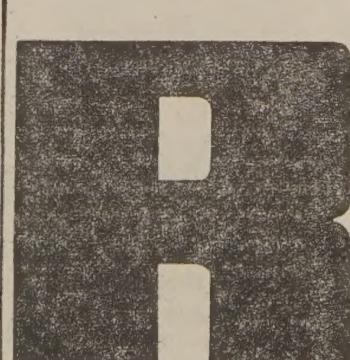
When Harry Knight says 'We know we are good, and we tell them we are good', it would sound slightly immodest anywhere else in the country. But not in Norwich, that 'fine city' appreciates success.

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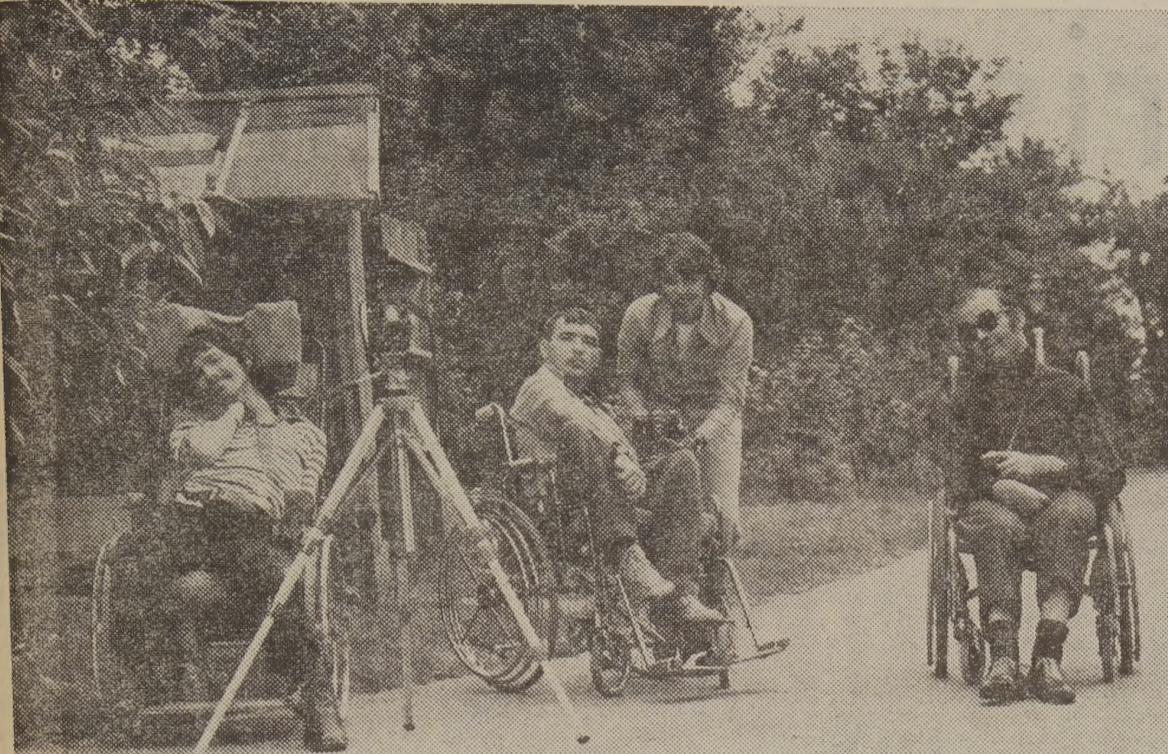
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SN Oct

Click! It's their own picture show



MARIA Bartha focusses her attention on helping Princess Marina residents Ray Parsons, Michael Wash and Keith Griffin to become independent photographers.

Maria develops a new hobby at Society centre

PICTURES by Hungarian-born photographer Maria Bartha have been appearing in Spastics News for many years now.

Recently, however, Maria's activities have taken on a new perspective. During the summer Maria started work on a photographic project to enable residents at one of The Spastics Society's centres, the Princess Marina in Kent, to take their own photographs, using adapted equipment.

Success

The scheme has proved to be a highly successful pilot project and Maria has already discussed the possibilities of extending the idea with the wardens of other centres.

'Ten years experience of photographing handicapped people for The Society had made me realise just how interested in photography many of them were. I was always being asked questions about the camera I was using,' says Maria.

Many of the handicapped people whom



THIS portrait of his wife Crystal was taken by Ray Parsons, seen on the far left of the picture above. It is the first time Ray has ever been able to take her picture, thanks to adapted equipment in the form of a bubble cable release.



Princess Marina was to find a more appropriate make of camera, according to the individual's degree of hand movement. Maria together with Marnaha Carter, one of The Spastics Society's occupational therapists, plans to devise and develop camera adaptations to suit the individual.

Helping Maria at the Princess Marina have been bursar John Edwards, who was formerly a professional photographer, and also gardener Norman Hussey, usually known as Ken, who is a keen amateur, prize-winning photographer.

A small available space for a darkroom which will take two to three wheelchairs means that the original group of six interested people will be able, if they wish, to learn darkroom techniques, going on to do their own developing and enlarging.

'Others will just be able to take better holiday snaps,' says Maria. 'The idea is not just photography for photography's sake, but to use it as a tool to encourage other interests. There's no reason, for example, why you shouldn't have a tape and slide show combined, shared by those with speech and those without.'

'And once someone has got a camera to suit them, and learned how to use it, there's no reason why they shouldn't get out and join an outside camera club.'

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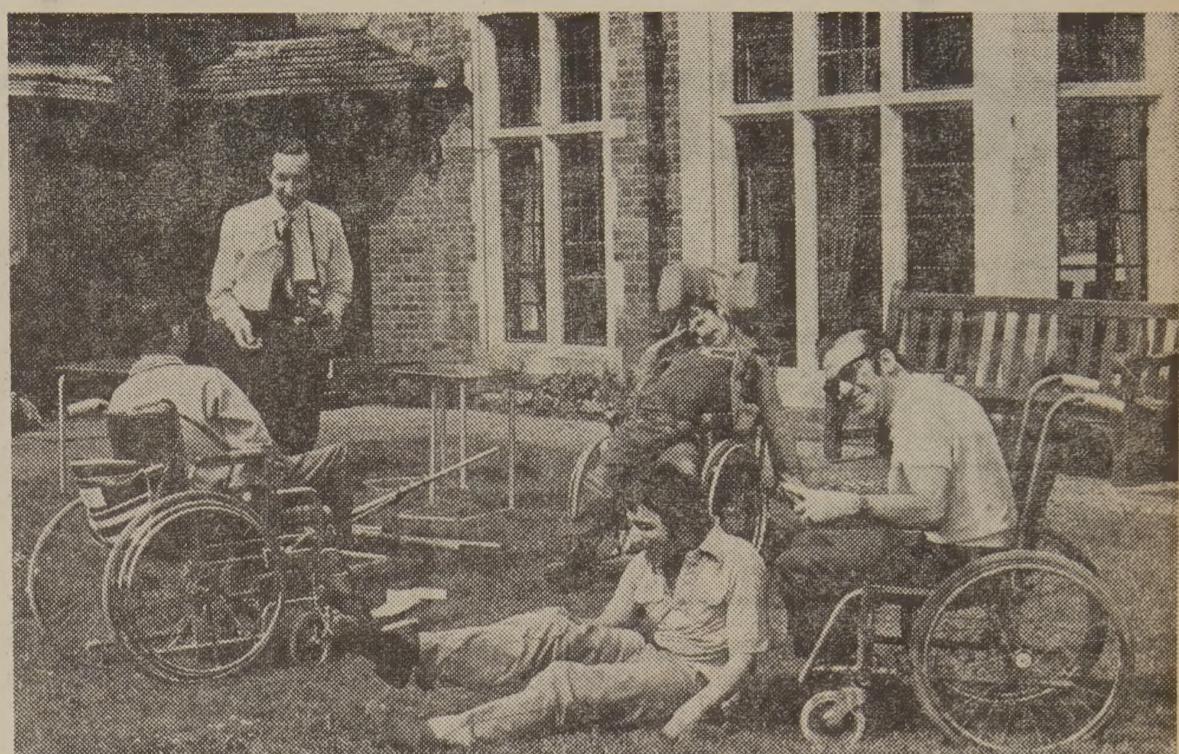
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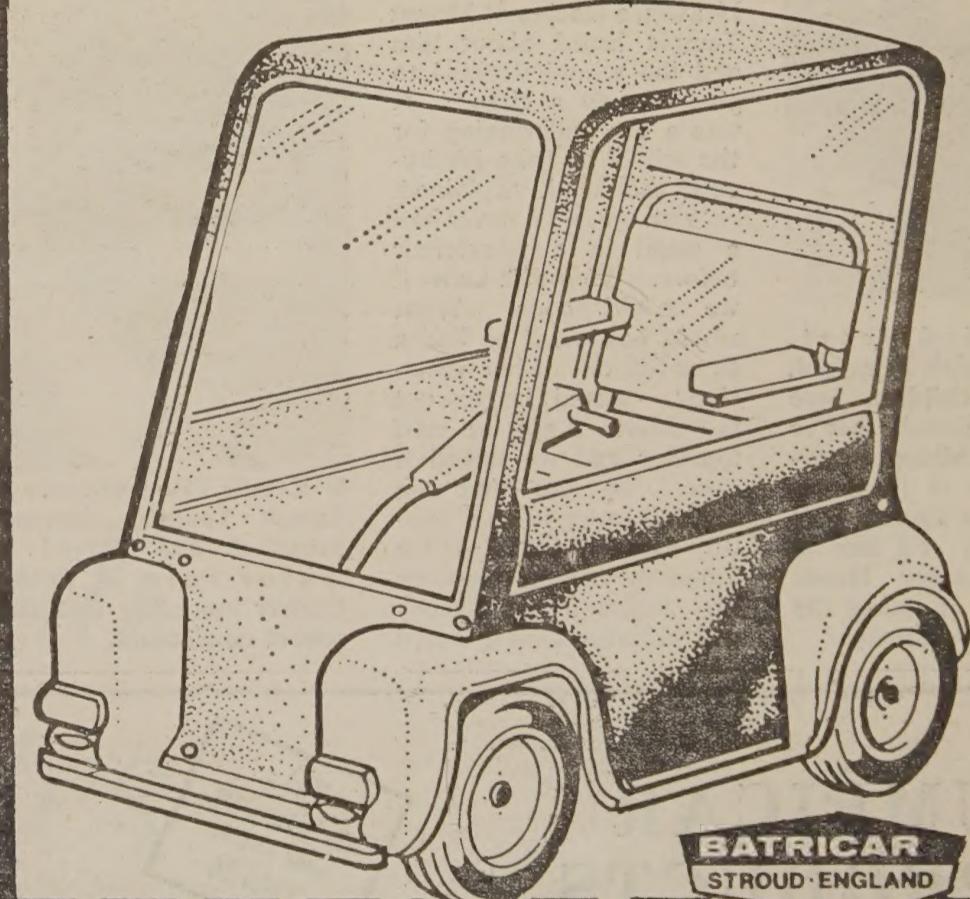
THE photographic project at the Princess Marina Centre has involved staff as well as residents. Bursar John Edwards, standing in the picture above, has been sharing his expertise as a former professional photographer along with camera keen residents Michael, Farid, Keith and Ray as well as with Arthur Kenny (right).

PICTURE LEFT: Gardener Norman Hussey, or Ken as he is usually known, is a keen prize-winning amateur photographer himself. This study of him posed outside the gates, was taken by Arthur Kenny.



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SN Oct

Comprehensive takes up challenge of 'genius' spastic boy

Educating Christy Nolan

Report from
Dublin by
Liz Cook

THE other day Mrs Bernadette Nolan was driving her severely handicapped son Christy, 14, home from school when he started to speak. 'Now, Christy,' she said, 'I've got to concentrate on driving so I can't look at you, I'll have to depend on your speech.' Slowly he grunted the words out: 'I - am - ve-ry - happy.' 'Why, Christy?' 'Be-cause I - am - do-ing - well - at - school.'

This was at a time when the BBC had said they wanted to film his life story, Lord Snowdon had been to photograph him for the Sunday Times and he had been to London to receive a literary award from The Spastics Society.

For Christy is no ordinary schoolboy. Confined to his wheelchair, his only voluntary movement is to nod his head. Yet his writings, laboriously tapped out on a typewriter, have led some people to call him a genius. But it is not that that pleases him, but the fact that he is one of nearly 800 pupils attending Mount Temple Comprehensive School near his home in Dublin.

By Irish standards Mount Temple is a big school and unusual in that it is inter-denominational. Children come from all over the city, and like all comprehensives it covers a wide range of intellectual ability and backgrounds. Set in 23 acres, the school buildings vary from Victorian Gothic to 1973 Modern when two schools were amalgamated.

For Christy's name to be added to the school register was a big step. The Central Remedial Clinic he had always attended did not cater for children beyond the age of 11. He stayed a further year but so great are his handicaps it seemed no school could cope with him, and Christy would be condemned to sitting at home in his wheelchair. Then Jack Heaslip, a teacher at Mount Temple heard about him and the school decided to give Christy a chance. It was a big undertaking for the school as John Medlycott, the head, explained.

'You see, we'd never had a pupil in a wheelchair before. We didn't know if we could cope. What would happen if he had a fit or fell out of his wheelchair — would he disrupt the class? I got the staff together and we talked it over. In the end we decided to try it on a two-way monthly basis. If we found we couldn't cope or Mrs Nolan found Christy was suffering then it would



● ONE of the gang, Christy and his pals, Anthony Mullins, Ronnie Vincent, Noel Canavan, Liam Masterson and Peter Nicholson, make their way towards the gym. Says Mrs Nolan of her son's chums in Class 3L: 'They are fabulous, they have totally accepted Christy, it doesn't matter that he is in a wheelchair, he's just one of the class.' Behind them are the school buildings, old and new, set in 23 acres of land.

end. But we were determined to try because the alternative would mean Christy sitting at home.'

So in February this year Christy's name appeared on the 2L class roll. 'Now,' says Mr Medlycott, 'it seems as if he has always been here. We cannot imagine the school without him.' Said Jim Casey, 'The more he is

here the more it makes sense that he's here.'

Mr Medlycott told the school about Christy and Jim Casey drew up a rota of two classmates each week to be responsible for getting Christy from one class to another. For the staff the early days were difficult but in a way they had not expected. Christy did none of the things they feared. Instead, one admitted: 'I didn't know how to treat him to be honest. I found I was talking to the back of the room or else I was zooming in on him, but now he is just one of the class.'

Because of the lack of response others found it disconcerting and wondered if he was getting anything out of the lessons. The children, however, found it easier, the girls automatically coming forward at first to help him. But the boys have taken on the simple tasks just as readily. A box of tissues is always to hand and whoever is sitting nearest Christy will reach forward and mop his chin.

The crisis occurred quite early on when Christy got his tongue caught between his teeth. It was in a class that Mr Medlycott was teaching. 'You could feel the tension in the class. They all wiped Christy's chin and now I was going to have to put my hand in Christy's mouth. I was filled with horror. How was I going to manage? I was on trial. I quickly walked up, hooked my little finger in and released his tongue and everything was alright. Christy smiled and that was it.'

'The children are very sensitive where he is con-

cerned. They took him to all his classes, including metalwork, until one day they wheeled him out because they realised the noise was distressing him.'

'They are delighted at the chance to look after him, even the toughest of them, they treat him like a kid brother. I warned them that just because he doesn't speak that they weren't to think that he couldn't understand them. I gather from Mrs Nolan that they accept him so totally that if they are up to something — like telling smutty jokes — they don't

exclude him from the group!'

Christy studies the basic course of English, maths, history, geography, RE and Irish, along with attending singing and PE, and now he is in his second year also does German, French, art and science.

Although he does no formal class work he is very much part of the class — although he cannot speak if he knows the answer to a question, said Miss Elspeth Henderson. 'Something may get

Continued on Page 8



● JOHN MEDLYCOTT, Mount Temple's Principal, says: 'The children here aren't exceptional, they're the same as children everywhere — some of them are problems, but Christy isn't one of them. I'd like to think that other Heads might think of doing the same. It is a challenge.'

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SN Oct

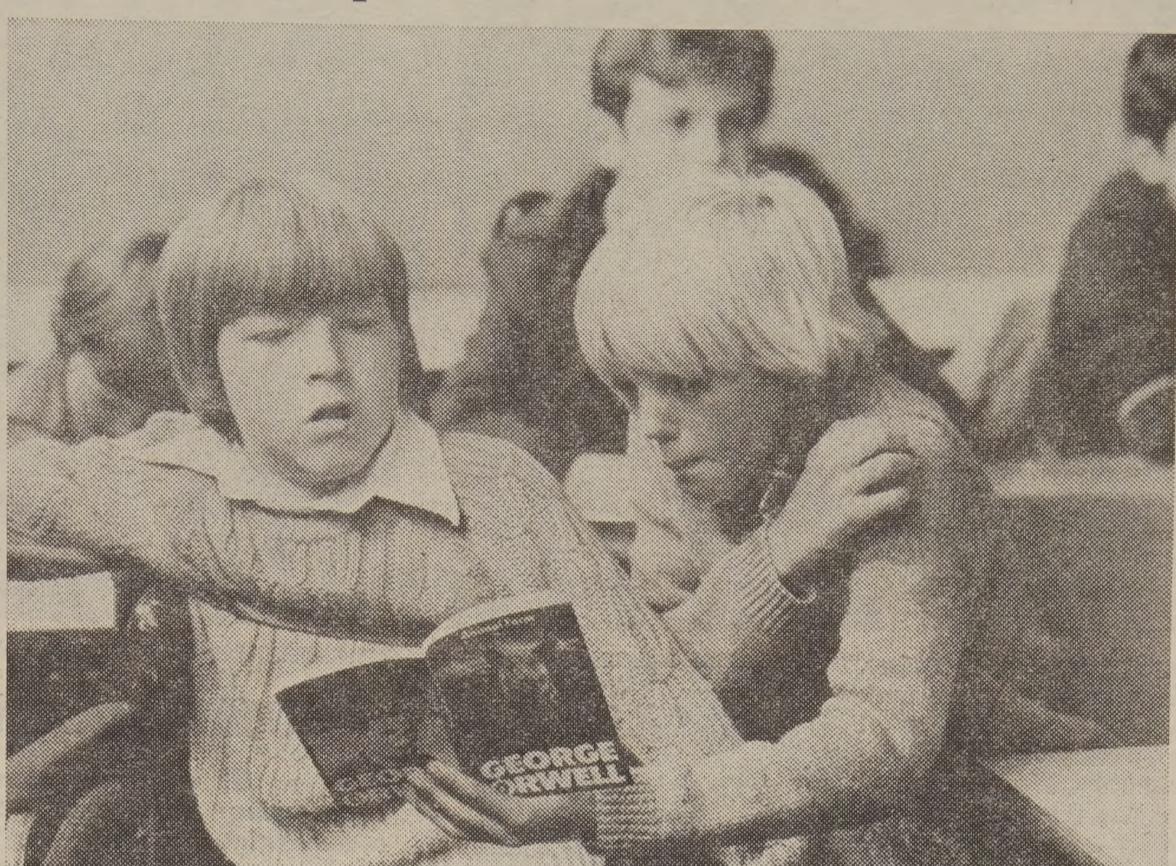


● THE first week of Christy's school life Mrs Nolan sat in a small room to be on hand just in case any of the teachers had a problem. She told them: 'Don't worry, I shall be here if you want me, but you'll find Christy will grow on you.' Now everyone agrees it is hard to imagine the school without him. At the end of that first week, Mrs Nolan drove Christy home and he told her that it had been the hardest but most rewarding week of his life.

Scenes from a happy school life



• **EVERY** lunch hour, class mates wheel Christy over to the sick bay where Mrs Nolan waits with a flask of hot sweet tea for him. That is all he wants to keep him going through the school day, then Mrs Nolan takes him to the cloakroom and that is all the care he needs.



• **ABOVE:** At the beginning of this year, no one would have believed this picture could be possible: Christy at school sitting with his best friend, Ronnie Vincent, 13, like most of Mount Temple's pupils had never met anyone in a wheelchair before. Now he is never far from Christy's side in class.

• **PICTURE left:** It's break time and Christy is, as always, part of a group. Friendships and feuds rage around him, school-work grumbled about, and out-of-school activities looked forward to, while Christy takes it all in.



• **JIM** Casey is Christy's tutor and drew up the rota of classmates to wheel Christy to and from lessons.



THIS month's issue has concentrated on the breakthrough of Christy Nolan into normal, full time education at an ordinary school. Next month we take a look at the breakthrough that vindicated a mother's belief that her severely spastic son was not just a helpless vegetable.

'I always knew he was clever but until the breakthrough I had no idea just how clever he was,' said Mrs Bernadette Nolan. Although Christy's literary genius is unique, Mrs Nolan's love and devotion, her determination to fight for the best for her child and her courage in the face of disappointment, are qualities shared by parents of handicapped children everywhere.

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News about the Spastics Pool

ACTRESS Beryl Reid, pictured centre, presenting first dividend cheques for £3,571 to Mrs R. Scobie, left, of Ashton, and Mrs N. Curtis of Frampton Cotterell, at the Bristol Old

Vic Theatre, in September.

The lucky winners took no time to decide what they were going to do with the money. Mrs Scobie will take her three children on holiday, and Mrs Curtis will be giving surprise presents to her husband and two daughters.

Beryl Reid, who was appearing at the Bristol Old Vic in 'Born in the Gardens', is a member of the Stars Organisation for Spastics.



MARY Thorpe of Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire, was delighted when the Spastics Pool's area supervisor Tom Lythe 'fixed it' for Jimmy Saville OBE to present her with a Pool first dividend cheque for £5,000.

The presentation took place during Jimmy's visit to Stoke Mandeville Hospital in Buckinghamshire. Mary, and her husband Doug, intend putting their prize money towards a new house. There was an additional bonus for Mary in the form of a cheque for £250 which she received as an official collector for the Pool.

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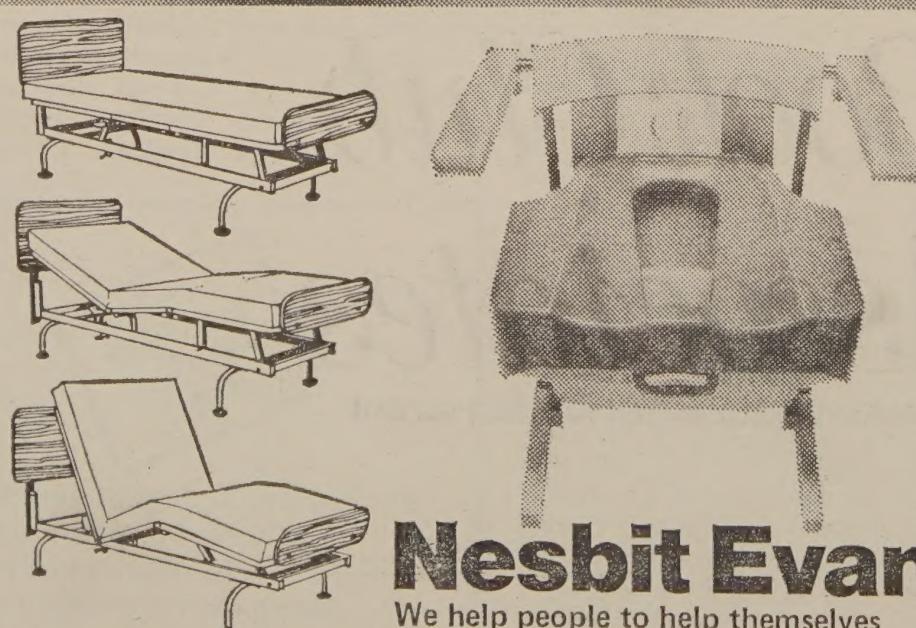
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Pages of 'something for everyone'

THE Spastics Pool's new mail order operation, Ninetree Gifts, which was launched with a 32-page, full colour catalogue in May, has been welcomed by Pool members. The response to

Ninetree Gifts was so encouraging that an autumn/winter 36-page catalogue, with an eight-page supplement, has been produced.

In addition to household items, do-it-yourself, products for the gardener and the motorist, there is a selection

of greetings cards from Spastics Cards and jewellery from the Society's Homework Section. The supplement offers gifts for all the family including hamper, toys, cosmetics, presents for 'Him' and 'Her' and Christmas decorations.

Spastics Pool collectors have the opportunity of earning commission on orders valued at £10 or over.

Copies of the brochure and Christmas supplement are available from Mike Shute, Ninetree Gifts, PO Box 215, Bristol BS99 7QX.



MRS Kim Rooke of Sedbury, Chepstow, receiving a £25,000 Spastics Pool first dividend cheque from Mr Kenneth Long, Chairman and Managing Director of Top Ten Promotions, during a cabaret and dance at the Tidenham British Legion, Sedbury.

Kim intends spending some of the money on a car and treating her six children.

Christy Nolan

Continued from Page 6
knocked to the floor by an involuntary jerk and that is his response to being taught.

Mr Medlycott is realistic that not all schools could copy Mount Temple, but he would advise other heads at least to have a go. 'It can only be done on an individual basis. It works for us because Christy is the boy that he is and Mrs Nolan is the person that she is. I would

do anything to help other Christy's, but I know that the school could not cope with an influx of handicapped pupils.

'Having Christy with us is a great challenge and I explained this to the children and told them I was trusting them and they have responded marvelously. It has certainly enriched the school — we believe the school benefits Christy — and we know Christy benefits the school.'

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SN Oct

A Little House with big ideas on caring

A MOBILE home located in the grounds of St Joseph's Convent, Hendon, is proving that small is not only beautiful but flexible and friendly, too. The Little House scheme offers short stay care with the caring done by volunteers who are already known to the handicapped person and their family, and this highly original but low budget idea could well be copied elsewhere.

Parents can safely leave a handicapped child, or handicapped adult relative while they enjoy a night out, go shopping for the day or go off on a fortnight's holiday. The Little House can also provide short notice short stay accommodation in case of family illness or emergency with the minimum of fuss and red tape.

Recently a cerebrally palsied lady in her 50's used the bungalow for an overnight stop together with her disabled com-



panion, on their return journey from a pilgrimage in Belgium. This summer holidays a working mother, a single parent with a teenage handicapped son, has been using the Little House to provide day care during the school holidays.

Donations

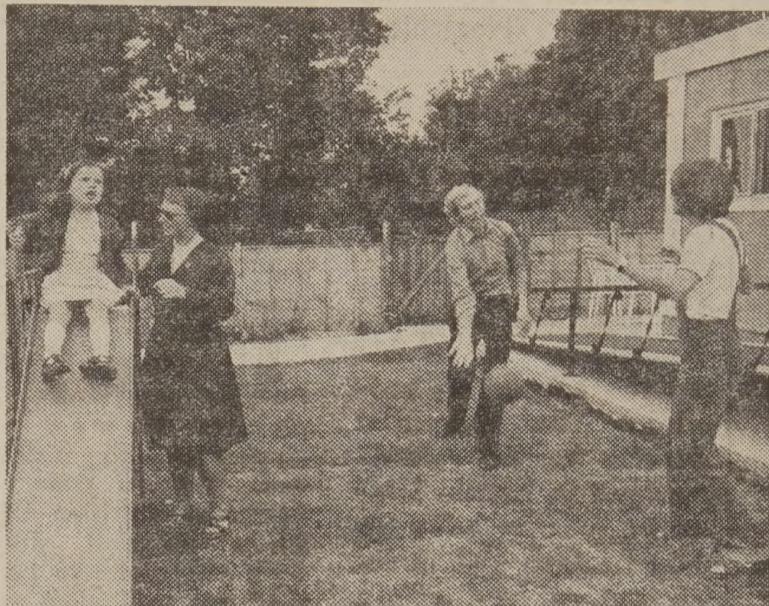
The Little House, which sleeps seven, is fitted with a specially designed bathroom and kitchen. It was bought at a cost of £7,000, raised entirely from voluntary donations, which included a £2,000 contribution from the Sembal Trust. A mobile home was chosen, not only for its relative cheapness, but also because of its convertability. The Little House can always be moved to a site by the seaside or in the country, says Sister Colette Griffiths, who is responsible for the scheme.

Staffing costs are kept to a minimum because the handicapped children and adults are cared for by volunteers from their own

locality who come and share their stay at the Little House. There are other volunteers, too, who come in to help in other ways, by cooking and cleaning rather than by direct caring. A trained nurse is on hand for anyone with medical problems and there are some local teachers who will always come and stay overnight if necessary.

The volunteers are sixth-formers, students or young men and women specially recruited and trained as part of the St Joseph's Volunteer Project. These living-in volunteers, who usually come from the same parish or locality as the handicapped person, create an easy-going fun atmosphere of organised chaos which makes the stay of the handicapped person a pleasant, enjoyable and totally non-institutional experience.

The Little House covers the diocese of Westminster and is open to anyone within that area regardless of their religious faith.



THE Little House has its own fenced-in garden, and is situated in the grounds of St Joseph's Centre, Hendon. The advantage of purchasing a mobile home as a short stay accommodation unit is that it could if necessary be moved to a

MICHELLE Keppler is an eight-year-old spastic girl who is no stranger to the Little House. The first time she stayed was during a family emergency when her Granny died and her mother had to go to the funeral. Michelle's stay this time was to enable her mother to visit Ireland for a short holiday with her non-handicapped brothers and sisters.

Playing the guitar is 20-year-old college student Isabelle Boruch who has been doing the practical 'home-making and house-parenting' part of the Little House project while Sister Colette concentrated on the organisation of the St Joseph's Volunteer Project.

Generosity builds new homes

THE generous action of the Gannochy Trust in agreeing to meet the building costs involved, will enable work to start on doubling the accommodation available for physically-handicapped Scots at the Upper Springland estate, Perth, before the end of this year.

The first phase of this scheme, which is administered by the Scottish Council for Spastics, opened in June last year and provides 24 flatlets in units of 12, each with its own communal dining/living room. A separate work centre gives employment for up to 36 men and women.

The second phase, now given the go-ahead, will provide a further 24 flatlets and a central spine with a kitchen and staff rooms, recreation and office accommodation. It is hoped that a third and final phase will include an all-purpose community centre and a further 24 flatlets.

It was the earlier generosity of the Gannochy Trust in donating £600,000 and gifting the five-acre site which enabled the first phase to be built. The offer to meet the building costs of the next phase, even though the Scottish Council will have to find about £100,000 for furnishing and equipment, is a gesture for which the Council — and the prospective residents — cannot be too grateful.

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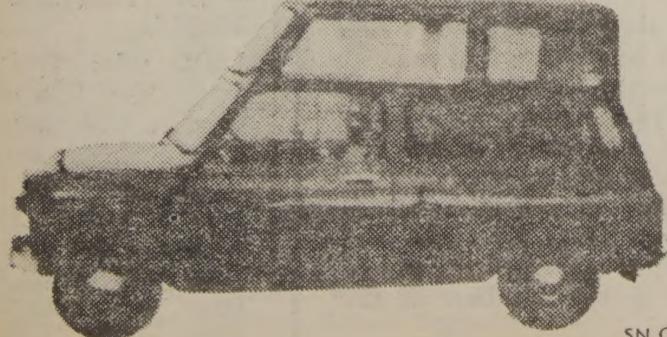
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STAYING in the Little House at the same time as Michelle was 20-year-old Gerard, who is autistic and who came along with a living-in volunteer already known to him and his family. Sister Colette who runs the St Joseph's Volunteer Project says that handicapped children and adults soon settle down and mix easily in the free and easy atmosphere of the Little House.

FLACKWELL Heath Bit Players did their bit to help spastics with a variety show at the Burnham Hall, Beaconsfield. The entertainment included songs, sketches and dances. Proceeds were split between the South Bucks Spastics Society and the Juniper Hill School in Flackwell Heath.

SN Oct

Campaign: Into the 80's

Continued from Page 1

aware that pregnant women could be alarmed while at their most vulnerable, the Society was determined to give them the facts so that they and their families could help stir some of the more complacent health authorities into action.

The enthusiasm with which newspapers and magazines took up the cause showed that we were justified in this hard-hitting approach to what is, and remains, a national scandal.

Mr Belson details some of the most important aspects of the first year of the campaign — the mammoth petition presented to the new Parliament; the Society's film *Priority of Priorities — Save our Babies*; the medical seminars held in key areas; the drive for extra funds for further research into the causes of handicap.

He praises the enthusiasm of supporters for the campaign, adding:

Many parents of handicapped children and many spastic people have been in the forefront of the campaign, and to them we extend our admiration and praise for their unselfish support. For them, the success of the "Save a Baby" campaign will come too late, but by their example they demonstrate the compassion and commitment which must be the foundation of our future as a caring Society.

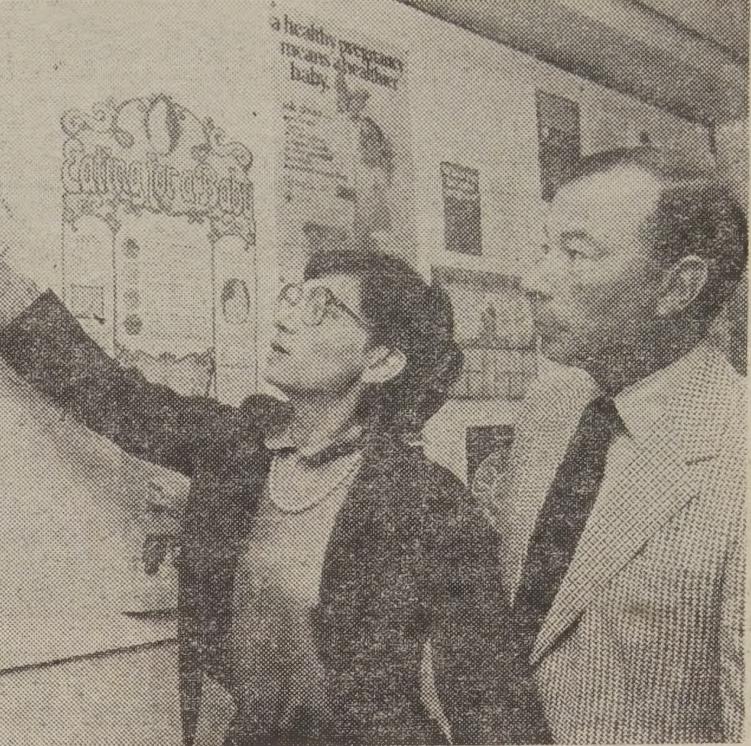
Canada's lesson for Britain?

Helping mothers at risk

HEALTH Service workers from all over the country met at The Spastics Society's London headquarters to hear a talk about a Canadian handicap prevention programme called 'Healthiest Babies Possible.'

The speaker was Mrs Sue Ross, Co-ordinator of the Vancouver Perinatal Health Project, a scheme described by The Spastics Society as an excellent example of taking the service to the consumer, providing an essential service for the care of women in ethnic minority groups who do not fit into the mainstream of health care facilities.

Mrs Sue Ross described how the results of the 'Healthiest Babies Possible' programme had shown that it was possible to identify and counsel antenatal non-attenders with a high degree of success.



The programme showed that it was possible for a high risk group to achieve birth outcomes which were equal if not better than those of the overall population.

In the 'Healthiest Babies Possible' programme, 213 pregnant women were given one-to-one nutrition counselling in their own homes by Nutrition Aides. These pregnant women were considered to be 'at risk' due to limited antenatal care, low income, language difficulties, new immigrant status and/or poor obstetric history.

Factors taken into consideration were whether the woman was undernourished, had poor or irregular weight gain, in-

'A NEW baby needs love long before it's born' reads the message on this poster used in the 'Healthiest Babies Possible' campaign in the City of Vancouver. Sue Ross, Co-ordinator of the Vancouver Perinatal Health Project, discussed methods of reaching at risk women with a lively and interested audience at The Spastics Society's headquarters while her husband, Peter Ross, a public relations consultant, described the publicity used to back the scheme.

fection or poor health, was under 18 years old, smoked, drank a lot of alcohol, had a significant drug intake, economic difficulties, had had pregnancies only 24 months apart, had experienced a difficult pregnancy before or had other problems.

Discussion of these problems between the woman and the aide took place from which emerged the opportunity to work out a sensible plan to give the woman the best possible chance of a healthy pregnancy.

Mrs Ross told the meeting of health workers at The Spastics Society headquarters that the 'Healthiest Babies Possible' programme was successful in achieving a reduction in the incidence of low birthweight babies to only 2.8 per cent. It also succeeded in increasing the mean birthweight of babies born to the 'at risk' population to 3.357 grams.

Mrs Sue Ross was introduced to the audience of health workers by Mr Arthur Wynn who, together with his wife Margaret, who was also present, is a strong supporter of The Spastics Society's 'Save a Baby' campaign. The latest book by Margaret and Arthur Wynn, 'Prevention of Handicap and the Health of Women' is published this month by Routledge and Kegan Paul.

In his introductory speech Mr Wynn made the point that there had also been recent heavy cuts in health services in Canada. Nevertheless the City of Vancouver had approved a budget extending the 'Healthiest Babies Possible' project.

The Spastics Society's 'Save a Baby' campaign has for the past 18 months been urging reforms in Britain's maternity services in order to reach 'at risk' mothers.

Experts confer on saving Scottish babies

TOP medical experts, trade union and employers' representatives, and members of voluntary bodies were among those taking part in a Perth Conference on Wednesday, September 26, which aimed to help establish why Scotland has one of the worst records in Western Europe for death and needless handicap among new-born babies.

Chairmen and speakers included Sir Dugald Baird, Emeritus Professor, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Aberdeen; Dr Gillian McIlwaine, Epidemiologist at the Royal Maternity Hospital, Glasgow; Miss Wilma Craigmire, President of the Scottish Health Visitors' Association; and Mrs M. Devenny, National Officer of the General and Municipal Workers' Union, Scottish Region.

Alarming

Perinatal mortality in Scotland in 1977 was 18.3 per 1,000 births compared with 16.9 in England and 10.7 in Sweden. However, there are further alarming differences in that in some areas of Scotland the rates rise dramatically, varying from 14 per 1,000 births in Fife to 25 per 1,000 births in Lanarkshire.

It is known that inadequate antenatal care facilities contribute significantly to the tragedy of baby deaths and avoidable handicap. However, as Scottish women seem particularly vulnerable, or at a particular disadvantage, the Scottish Council for Spastics organised the conference in the hopes that it will determine the steps that are necessary to achieve a reduction in high rates of death and handicap among the Scottish babies.

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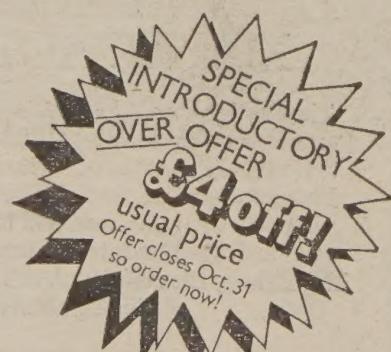
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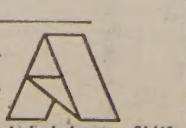
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SN Oct



SUE Ross shows a copy of the popular 'Baby's Best Chance' book to Margaret and Arthur Wynn. In their latest book, 'Prevention of Handicap and the Health of Women,' the Wynns make the comment that 'making a baby is a formidable exercise in protein synthesis.' Yet the diet of so many at risk mothers in this country and elsewhere is totally inadequate. Nutrition counselling in their own homes is the aim of the Vancouver project which has achieved a reduction in the numbers of low birthweight babies born.

People and places in the news



TWENTY - six - year - old Julie Hartley from Blackpool has a tricky transport problem. Outside Julie's front door stands a new specially adapted Mini which she can't yet drive, while the Invacar which has taken her around for the past seven years has been towed away by a man from the Ministry.

Julie, who is spastic and who cannot stand without support or walk to the end of the street, had hoped to hang on to the Invacar until she had taken her driving test in the adapted

Mini in November. But the man from the Ministry thought otherwise.

'She has opted to lease a car from Motability which is a charitable organisation and not Government run,' said a spokesman from the Department of Health and Social Security. 'To give the Invacar and the mobility allowance would mean she is getting dual benefit and that would be unfair to those who are in similar position to her.'

Picture by West Lancashire Evening Gazette



THE Wolverhampton and District Spastics Society had the pleasure of sending wedding congratulations to 23-year-old Christine Fletcher, who married 32-year-old quantity surveyor, Harry Mann.

Christine, a spastic, is a former student of the National Star Centre, Cheltenham. She met Harry at a disco for the handicapped where he was a voluntary ambulance driver.

Picture by Wolverhampton Express and Star



WHEN Mrs Linda Smith, recently retired chairman of the Jersey Spastics Society visited the Douglas Arter Centre in Salisbury recently, she was presented with a bronze Welsh dragon by Mrs Joyce Smith, a Vice-Chairman of

The Spastics Society.

Earlier in the summer when Mrs Smith, or 'Auntie Linda', as she is affectionately known locally, took the chair for the last time at the 25th Annual General Meeting of the Jersey Spastics Society, she said that the main aim for the future should be for research to find reasons and prevent babies being born handicapped.

The Jersey Spastics Society is contributing £15,000 to the Society's 'Save a Baby' Campaign.

The new chairman/secretary of the Jersey Spastics Society said that the finest tribute and gift that she and the committee could give Mrs Smith was their determination to keep alive and fruitful the work for which she had been the inspiration for so many years.



IT was a happy holiday send-off for the 15 trainees and five escorts from Monmouthshire Spastics Society's work centre in Cwmbran as they set off for their summer vacation in Jersey.

The trainees had been

saving up for the trip for the past 18 months and a gift of £70 from the local rugby charity fund enabled them to take their two minibuses along as well.

Picture by Monmouthshire Free Press



MEMBERS of the Kidderminster and District Spastics Association watch as their chairman Stephen Quayle receives a cheque for £100 from Round Table chairman Tony Powell.

Up till now the group has had to hire vehicles to transport handicapped people twice a week to a specialist workshop in Birmingham. But now a local firm, Brintons Ltd, has donated a van which has been converted into a minibus at a cost of £400.

Picture Kidderminster Times

PICTURE below: There's a certain casual give-away touch to the way 22-month-old toddler club member Andrea Quille is handing over that cheque for £208.86 to Mrs Elizabeth Evans, appeals officer for The Spastics Society. Andrea is being held in the arms of Mrs Nicola Gregory, treasurer of the Little Imps Playgroup in Shottery, who recently organised a sponsored pram push in aid of the 'Save a Baby' campaign.

Picture by Stratford-upon-Avon Herald



WHEN Mr Ted Sparkes retired from his post as gardener at Wakes Hall Spastics Centre, run by the Stars Organisation for Spastics, his nephew, Ian Root, who is a resident at the Hall, presented Ted with his retirement gift, a portable television set.

Mr Sparkes was the propagator of one of Wakes Hall's most successful fund-raising ventures, the garden centre.

'We started off selling buckets of cut flowers at

the roadside and a few cactus plants,' says Ted. 'And the money was ploughed back into building up the garden business.'

Now Wakes Hall has greenhouses, potting sheds and a regular stream of customers who come from miles around.

'The past 15 years have been the happiest of my life,' says Ted. 'They have let me use my judgment and get on with the job.'

Picture by Suffolk Free Press



CELEBRITY opening for the first Spastics shop in the Barking area as judo king Brian Jacks, BBC Superstars champion, signs autographs for young fans. 'We want local people to know we're here,' says shop manageress Mrs Christine Bannister. 'We need their support if we're to be successful.'

Picture by Barking and Dagenham Post

'Money can't buy happiness — but it can buy a dream'

IT was really only to be expected that the sun would shine on Saturday, September 22, for that was the day that severely handicapped Joey Deacon and his friends had their new bungalow home officially opened by the Dutch TV personality, Kees Van Kooten, whose programme had brought in the money to build it.

Just before he cut the tape, Kees said: 'I thought it was supposed to be the start of your autumn but with this sun a new summer is starting for our four friends. People say money cannot buy happiness but here is a case where money can buy dreams — once you have got past the barriers of bureaucracy!'

This was a reference to the local council's initial opposition to the siting of the three bungalows to be built with the £50,000 raised by Kees' film of Joey's life in St Lawrence's Hospital, Caterham, where he has been a patient for 40 years. Kees' film followed the overwhelmingly successful showing on Dutch TV of Brian Gibson's dramatised documentary for BBC TV of Joey's life story 'Tongue Tied.' Joey wrote his book with the help of Ernie Roberts, Tom Blackburn and Michael Sangster, and now the four will live together in the new bungalow.

Kees continued: 'I know it is a cliché, but to say that Joey's bungalow is a symbol of friendship is really true. It is an expression of our admiration for the lessons they have taught us by their perseverance and simple love.'

Earlier he had arrived with his wife Barbara, Vera Beths and Werner Herbers for the official ceremony. 'I could not believe my eyes as we drove in and saw the bungalows actually built — they are beautiful homes. We never thought they would be like this. It was not much for us to do the programme, it has happened because Joey is such a wonderful man. We have spastics in Holland, but no one like Joey.'

It was a gala occasion with representatives from local authorities, and major charities such as The Spastics Society and the National Society for Mentally Handicapped Children whose publications editor, Victoria Shennan had brought along a display case of 'Tongue Tied' in its different translations, Dutch, Swedish, Italian, French and Japanese as well as the American version, to adorn the bungalow walls. Also among the crowds of well-wishers, many of whom had shared the same ward as the four for decades, was the Hospital's League of Friends' President, Sir Geoffrey Howe, Chancellor of the Exchequer.

He said: 'I very much wanted to be here for today's event, I found it immensely moving — it has been a marvellous occasion.'

Chris Molesworth, aged 14, of the Society's Wilfred Pickles School, who played the child Joey in the BBC film, and John Prasher, of Croydon, who played Joey as a young adult, were also there to see the opening of the bungalow called 'Amsterdam.' In fact only one person was missing — Brian Gibson — who made the original award-winning film. However he came for the dance in the evening that rounded off what Dr Geoffrey Harris, the hospital's Medical Superintendent, termed St Lawrence's 'red letter day.'



● MICHAEL, Joey, Tom and Ernie in his new Batcarr outside the bungalow the famous four now share. It was Ernie who interpreted the grunts from Joey, who cannot speak, when the book that gave them fame was written between them, and it was Ernie who spoke for all four when he gave the vote of thanks at the bungalow's official opening. Ernie is a former winner of The Spastics Society's Achievement Award.

'Fit for work' campaign seeks jobs for disabled

'FIT for Work', the Government Man-power Services Commission's campaign to encourage the development of more work opportunities for disabled people, got the go-ahead from Secretary of State for Employment, Mr James Prior, at Marylebone Station, London, on September 17.

On platform 4 stood a British Rail exhibition train, all ready to set off on a tour of provincial cities, carrying display material showing the capabilities of disabled people to prospective employers, together with information on the help which is available to employers from the Commission.

During October the train will be making two day visits to Liverpool (October 1-2); Manchester (October 3-4); Glasgow (October 5-8); Newcastle (October 9-10); Leeds (October 11-12); Sheffield (October 15-16) and Leicester (October 17-18). But there will also be local presentations based on the 'Fit to Work' theme in those areas not visited by the train and these have been arranged largely by local Disablement Committees.



Copies of a booklet 'Disabled Workers are Good Workers' are being sent to over 75,000 firms all over the country as part of the campaign, together with details of an annual 'Fit for Work' award scheme, which involves the selection of up to 100 firms who have shown positive policies and practices in employing disabled people.

PROVING himself 'Fit for Work,' Graham Rossiter, 20, has been spastic since birth. Work in a supermarket was too much for him but with the help of his Disablement Resettlement Officer Graham found employment with a do-it-yourself firm in Wells and successfully completed a nine-month training period in shop management with the firm.



GOVERNMENT, industry and unions agree that more must be done to help the country's 130,000 jobless disabled people find employment. Pictured with the new 'Fit for Work' trophy and plaque are, from left to right, Mr Jack Jones, former general secretary of the TGWU, Mr Martin Jukes, past president of the CBI, Mr Geoffrey Gilbertson, seated, chairman of the National Advisory Council on the Employment of Disabled People and of the Fit for Work award scheme, Mr John Cassels, Director of the MSC, and Mr James Prior, Secretary of State for Employment.

Chateau Spastique anyone?

A NEW Spastics Society publication* describing a study of work centres for severely disabled adults highlights the special activities in one Centre.

'There the very severely handicapped are mostly watching other people work, but they are more than passive spectators; what they are watching has been so designed that they are interested and can learn from what is going on. The staff who are engaged in the activities involve the watchers in what is happening and explain it as they go along.'

'Activities such as plant rearing or wine making are used, and while production of "Chateau Spastique" is never likely to be a serious threat to the French wine trade, the workers are learning how wine comes into being. Someone who is severely handicapped would find it hard to achieve the same sort of involvement in watching another worker assembling pieces of some dull-looking component.'

*Industry and Effort, a study of work centres in England, Wales and Northern Ireland for severely disabled adults, by Hilary Schlesinger and Edward Whelan. Published by The Spastics Society in association with William Heinemann Medical Books Ltd. Price £6, plus 40p post and packing.

'At risk' teenagers — Society's concern

THERE was a large audience of professionals from the field of health education at the premiere of 'If Only We'd Known', a series of 'trigger' films launched by the Health Education Council and The Spastics Society. In his introductory speech, Mr Dorrien Belson, Chairman of The Spastics Society, outlined the importance of 'trigger' films. 'They are not intended to offer solutions or even information. But they do aim to make discussion of issues easier and more effective', he told the audience.

The central character in 'If Only We'd Known' is Debbie, a pregnant 16-year-old, a typical example of the at-risk teenage mother who puts off going to the antenatal clinic.

The films are designed for use in schools and youth groups, and are intended to encourage 15-plus children to discuss the responsibilities of parenthood and to increase their understanding of the problems that exist, not only for the young mother, but also for the father and the girl's parents.

Following the films there was a panel discussion chaired by Professor J. A. Davis, Professor of Paediatrics at Cambridge University, and a member of the Health Education Council. Also on the panel were Mr James Loring, Director of The Spastics Society, and Mr Jeff Lee, Dissemination Officer for the Council's

'Living Well' project. Other educationalists included Mrs Jane Jenks, the newly appointed warden of the Inner London Education Authority's Teachers' Centre; Mrs Prudence Stone, Head of Religious Education at Rossett High School, Harrogate; and Mr Brian Keywood, Course Director of the Personal Relationships Department, Sutton Centre School, Sutton-in-Ashfield, in Nottinghamshire.

The message of care before birth, emphasised in The Spastics Society's 'Save a Baby' campaign is being taken up by the Health Education Council which will be launching a campaign early in 1980 to encourage expectant mothers to look after themselves during pregnancy and to make greater use of antenatal clinics.

The three films comprising 'If Only We'd Known' are available on free loan from Concord Film Council Ltd, 201 Felixstow Road, Ipswich, IP3 9BJ, or The Central Film Library, Government Buildings, Bromyard Avenue, London W3 7JB.

Minister praises volunteers

MR Timothy Raison, Home Office Minister of State responsible for voluntary services, said at the York Conference of Councils for Voluntary Service in September:

'In recent years, there has been a remarkable resurgence of life in the voluntary sector. The present government welcomes this unreservedly. In every sphere we need to roll back the frontiers of the state and liberate the energies of ordinary people and the vast

range of co-operative enterprise which, left to themselves, our people have usually been able to originate. And I make no bones about saying that in the present economic climate your work is going to be more important than ever.'

'There has, of course, in recent years been a steady increase in the amount of government grant-aid for voluntary organisations. This is a further mark of the recognition which government gives to the contribution made by the voluntary sector. The total in 1978/9 under this head was

around £50 million. The present government fully intends to maintain this level so far as is consistent with the overall needs of our financial strategy.'

'The government recognises the very great contribution which the voluntary sector has to make to our social development. While a key to that contribution is the independence of the voluntary organisations in a free society, I hope that it will be pursued in partnership with the statutory agencies in which each party recognises the need of the other.'